

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of displaying layered data, said method
2 comprising:
3 identifying a plurality of shading colors, each of the
4 shading colors corresponding to a different data
5 layer;
6 identifying a plurality of data items to be displayed
7 in a display window;
8 for each data item:
9 determining one of the data layers corresponding
10 to the data item;
11 selecting a shading color from the plurality of
12 shading colors, wherein the shading color
13 corresponds to the determined data layer;
14 formatting the data item using the selected
15 shading color; and
16 displaying the formatted data item in the display
17 window, wherein each formatted data item is
18 positioned with a left margin substantially
19 similar to a left margin corresponding to
20 the other data items.

1 2. The method as described in claim 1 wherein the shading
2 color includes grayscale shading.

1 3. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 analyzing an attribute corresponding to each data
3 item;
4 determining a visual highlight corresponding to the
5 attribute;
6 including the visual highlight with the formatted data
7 item.

1 4. The method as described in claim 3 wherein the visual
2 highlight is selected from the group consisting of
3 blinking, text coloring, bolding, italicizing,
4 underlining, striking through, shadowing, outlining,
5 capitalizing, and font changing.

1 5. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 receiving a data item selection from a user;
3 displaying one or more formatted data items below the
4 selected data item in response to the user
5 selecting an unexpanded data item; and
6 removing one or more formatted data items from the
7 display area beneath the selected data item in
8 response to the user selecting an expanded data
9 item.

1 6. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 displaying a graphic icon with each formatted data
3 item, the graphic icon indicating whether the
4 formatted data item is expanded.

1 7. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 displaying an alphanumeric level identifier with each
3 formatted data item that identifies the level
4 corresponding to the formatted data item.

1 8. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 displaying a level indicator bar with each formatted
3 data item, wherein one margin of the level
4 indicator bar indicates a data level
5 corresponding to the formatted data item.

1 9. An information handling system comprising:

2 one or more processors;
3 a memory accessible by the processors;
4 a display screen accessible by the processors; and
5 a layered data display tool to display layered data on
6 the display screen, the layered data display tool
7 including:
8 means for identifying a plurality of shading colors,
9 each of the shading colors corresponding to a
10 different data layer;
11 means for identifying a plurality of data items to be
12 displayed on the display screen;
13 for each data item:
14 means for determining one of the data layers
15 corresponding to the data item;
16 means for selecting a shading color from the
17 plurality of shading colors, wherein the
18 shading color corresponds to the determined
19 data layer;
20 means for formatting the data item using the
21 selected shading color; and
22 means for displaying the formatted data item on
23 the display screen, wherein each formatted
24 data item is positioned with a left margin
25 substantially similar to a left margin
26 corresponding to the other data items.

1 10. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 wherein the shading color includes grayscale
3 shading.

1 11. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 further comprising:

3 means for receiving a data item selection from a user;
4 means for displaying one or more formatted data items
5 below the selected data item in response to the
6 user selecting an unexpanded data item; and
7 means for removing one or more formatted data items
8 from the display area beneath the selected data
9 item in response to the user selecting an
10 expanded data item.

1 12. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 further comprising:

3 means for displaying a graphic icon with each
4 formatted data item, the graphic icon indicating
5 whether the formatted data item is expanded.

1 13. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 further comprising:

3 means for displaying an alphanumeric level identifier
4 with each formatted data item that identifies the
5 level corresponding to the formatted data item.

1 14. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 further comprising:

3 means for displaying a level indicator bar with each
4 formatted data item, wherein one margin of the
5 level indicator bar indicates a data level
6 corresponding to the formatted data item.

1 15. A computer program product for displaying layered
2 data, said computer program product comprising:

3 means for identifying a plurality of shading colors,
4 each of the shading colors corresponding to a
5 different data layer;

6 means for identifying a plurality of data items to be
7 displayed in a display window;
8 for each data item:
9 means for determining one of the data layers
10 corresponding to the data item;
11 means for selecting a shading color from the
12 plurality of shading colors, wherein the
13 shading color corresponds to the determined
14 data layer;
15 means for formatting the data item using the
16 selected shading color; and
17 means for displaying the formatted data item in
18 the display window, wherein each formatted
19 data item is positioned with a left margin
20 substantially similar to a left margin
21 corresponding to the other data items.

1 16. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2 wherein the shading color includes grayscale shading.

1 17. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2 further comprising:
3 means for receiving a data item selection from a user;
4 means for displaying one or more formatted data items
5 below the selected data item in response to the
6 user selecting an unexpanded data item; and
7 means for removing one or more formatted data items
8 from the display area beneath the selected data
9 item in response to the user selecting an
10 expanded data item.

1 18. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2 further comprising:

means for displaying a graphic icon with each formatted data item, the graphic icon indicating whether the formatted data item is expanded.

19. The computer program product as described in claim 15 further comprising:

means for displaying an alphanumeric level identifier with each formatted data item that identifies the level corresponding to the formatted data item.

20. The computer program product as described in claim 15 further comprising:

means for displaying a level indicator bar with each formatted data item, wherein one margin of the level indicator bar indicates a data level corresponding to the formatted data item.